

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 853

By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to recognize Elaine Lee Turner, Third Annual Living Legend Awards honoree.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should specially recognize those estimable individuals who have dedicated their time and energies toward enhancing the quality of life in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Elaine Lee Turner, who is being honored at the Third Annual Living Legend Awards in recognition of the leadership and service she has provided to the people of Memphis and Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, the Third Annual Living Legend Awards ceremony, which honors Harriet Tubman and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will be held at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis on March 8, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Elaine Lee Turner has served the Memphis community with purpose and conviction as an educator, civil rights activist, entrepreneur, and historian; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, Ms. Turner and her sister, Joan Lee, founded Heritage Tours, the first African-American-oriented tour company in Tennessee and perhaps the first of its kind in the entire United States; and

WHEREAS, in the thirty-seven years since the company was founded, the interest in African-American heritage has grown tremendously, and the tours conducted by Heritage have attracted visitors from around the globe; and

WHEREAS, she also promotes African-American heritage and history as director of Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum and the W.C. Handy Memphis Home and Museum; through Heritage Tours, she established the W.C. Handy Heritage Awards, which pay tribute to outstanding Memphis musicians; and

WHEREAS, a charter member of the Coalition of 100 Black Women and Board of Directors of the African American Museum of Memphis, Ms. Turner also gives back to her community through her service on the Board of Directors of Zion Community Project and as a member of Memphis Tourism and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; and

WHEREAS, she was instrumental in the expansion of the National Civil Rights Museum as a member of the planning advisory committee; and

WHEREAS, Elaine Lee Turner was an activist in the Civil Rights Movement as a high school and college student; she was involved in numerous protests and demonstrations that challenged Memphis's segregation laws and arrested on three occasions; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Turner participated in the Selma March in 1965 and the Meredith March Against Fear of 1966, during which she was honored to meet Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, the Shelby County Commission erected a historical marker on Main Street to honor Elaine Lee Turner and her six sisters for the pivotal role they played in helping to make Memphis a better place; and

WHEREAS, she is fortunate to share love and companionship with her children, Melvin Turner II, Alana Turner, Attorney Kamilah Turner, and Kevin Turner; and

WHEREAS, Elaine Lee Turner is an exemplary individual; her commitment to excellence and community service is representative of the Volunteer State, and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we congratulate Elaine Lee Turner upon her recognition at the Third Annual Living Legend Awards, applaud her outstanding community leadership, and extend our best wishes for continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.